

From Rev. H. Loomis, Japan. 1831

Sam. Native converts

Ex

J. ISHII AND HIS INSTITUTION.

Japan's Chief Apostle of Faith.

THE GEORGE MULLER OF THE ORIENT

AND

HIS UNIQUE ORPHANAGE.

BY

JAMES H. PETTEE.



YOKOHAMA :

Printed at the YOKOHAMA MISSION PRESS,
F. STANILAND & Co., 70, Main Street.

1892.

J. ISHII AND HIS INSTITUTION.

Japan's Chief Apostle of Faith.

THE GEORGE MULLER OF THE ORIENT

AND

HIS UNIQUE ORPHANAGE.

BY

JAMES H. PETTER.



YOKOHAMA :

Printed at the YOKOHAMA MISSION PRESS,
F. STANILAND & Co., 75, Main Street.

1892.

J. ISHII AND HIS INSTITUTION.

Japan's Chief Apostle of Faith.

THE GEORGE MULLER OF THE ORIENT

AND

HIS UNIQUE ORPHANAGE.

BY

JAMES H. PETTEE.



YOKOHAMA :

Printed at the YOKOHAMA MISSION PRESS,
F. STANILAND & Co., 70, Main Street.

1892.

"Faith is the subtle chain
Which binds us to the Infinite."

ELIZABETH SMITH.

"Prayer moves the Hand which moves the World."

J. A. WALLACE.

"Thou hast been the Helper of the Fatherless."

PSALMS x, 14.

J. ISHII AND HIS INSTITUTION.

Mr. J. Ishii, of Okayama, is perhaps the most widely known living Japanese Christian. Not only from end to end of this Eastern land is his worth respected, but his name has gone out into all Christendom as a synonym for fearless faith and practical piety. He is rightly known as a man of strong faith and tender sweetness of life. His simple trust in God is as refreshing as it is rare in this age of science and the *Soroban* (reckoning board).

He possesses to a wonderful degree "that marvellous sixth sense" which sees God, and his faith is in truth "reason on wings." It knows in whom it has believed, can give the wherefore for its conduct, and is ever reaching out after larger things, mounting higher toward the heavens.

So many inquiries have come for a statement in English of the man's work thus far, and so wide an interest has been awakened in him and his labors, that a brief record of the leading events of his life, together with the causes that led to the establishment of his Orphanage, and its present condition and outlook, seems called for.

This statement, which makes no pretensions to literary excellence, is in the main a rough translation of Mr. Ishii's words as they fell from his lips. My chief endeavor has been

to render correctly the exact facts in this marvellous story taken from life.

He was born at Takanabe in the province of Hiuga, on the south-east side of the island of Kiusiu, in the first year of Keio, the father of the present Emperor, which means A.D. 1865. He is thus but twenty-seven years of age, though like a true Japanese, he calls himself twenty-eight. He is not quite certain about the day, but thinks it was April 7th.

His parents were *Samurai*, and thus of good standing. Marrying at the ages of eighteen and seventeen, and both being very poor, they set to work, and by dint of strict honesty and great industry acquired a property of six or seven thousand dollars, the father thus becoming the wealthiest and most prominent man in his little village, Uwaemura, a suburb of the town of Takanabe. The mother was the better worker of the two, and to this day is frankly given the credit by her husband of the family success. She has been a woman of few words, of simple but earnest life and unremitting toil. It is easy to see where the son inherited his peculiar naturalness of mind: that charming simplicity of character which is always remarked by those who meet him.

✓ The father was a highly respected official in the local Public Works Department, his duty being the encouragement and supervision of agriculture. He held this office until the son was twelve years old, since which time he has lived upon his income. Both parents are still living, and the mother embraced Christianity in 1888. The father, though never making a public profession, is at heart a believer in the western religion, and naturally proud of his son's distinction therein.

These parents, who through poverty had been unable to gain an education for themselves, were determined that their children, especially the son, should not lack in this needful part of a training for life. The elder child, a daughter, received no

special education. She is now the wife of Makane Iwamura, of Kumamoto, and is associated in Christian work with the missionaries (Gulicks and others) of that city.

But the son's intellectual training was carefully watched and planned for. From six to ten years of age, at or near home. At first he went with his sister to a "*Terakoya*" close by, a private school by priests in a temple shed. Then the modern system of graded schools going into effect in that region, the boy was sent to the newly opened Sho Gakko (Primary School). After that, in obedience to the Japanese proverb, "Send the loved child on a journey," the boy was placed in a school of some local repute at Miyazaki, seven *ri* (seventeen miles) away, the city where our fellow missionaries, the Clarks, are now laboring. There were ten boarders and ninety day scholars. The children cleaned their own rice, did their own cooking, and cared for themselves generally. Being a home boy and fond of his mother, this was a hard experience for young Ishii, but his father insisted on it for a little over a year, when he was allowed to return home.

At the age of eleven or twelve, young Ishii's attention was first called to the Christian religion. Strange and crude as that experience was, he marks it as the first in a chain of causes bringing about his present religious condition. In reading a translation of Peter Parley's "History of the World," he saw a representation of the cross in a picture of the Crusaders. A school friend told him that if he worshipped that unseen by others, he could work magic (*mahō*). So he tried it often, saying over when by himself in water-closets or other places, "*Christo Jūji gun Dono*" "O, Christ, Lord of the Army of the Cross."

One day, while fishing with other boys for river carp (*funa*) and eels, none of the party having any success, it occurred to him to try his new magic art. So after a silent "prayer and act of worship," he threw out his hook and immediately pulled

in a fish : not once, but many times, and always with results, he alone of the party making any catch. At another time, when off with friends who had no luck, he quietly remarked to one of them, " I can tell you how to catch some ; just say over these words and throw your line so." The boy did as he was told and pulled in a big fish. Naturally the superstitious youngsters were all deeply impressed. Mr. Ishii dates his first idea of an unseen all-powerful God and prayer to him from that crude boyish experience.

At fifteen he did what seven out of every ten country students in Japan try hard to do, and the remaining three would be glad to do, went to Tokyo for a year's study. He was in the Shiba Kogyokusha, a celebrated private school. He remembers the foreign missionary then teaching in the school, though not his name, but did not, like some of his friends, visit the western teacher's home at Tsukiji.

There was great political excitement in the capital at the time. The students were incensed against Prince Iwakura for his pacific settlement of the Kofuto difficulty with Russia, and threatened to assassinate him. It was also the time of impending war between Japan and China over the Riukiu Islands, a result happily averted by Gen. Grant's mediation. Our hero saw the great American general and was as much excited as any of his fellows. Returning home he ventilated his views on the political situation, and then wrote them down while staying at a hotel. A government spy in the next room heard his talk, entered his room in young Ishii's absence, seized his inflammatory journal and caused his arrest, supposing him to be an unsuccessful assassin of the great Japanese prince.

In this connection occurred what Mr. Ishii regards as the second in a chain of causes leading to his present faith in the mysteries of an unseen world. On the night of May 12th, 1880, he dreamed that the police came and seized him. The

next morning about eight o'clock, in marched two policemen and began to carry out his dream to a remarkable nicety. Thinking over this coincidence while confined in jail, he was led first to believe in an invisible God. Until informed in the courtroom at his trial, in response to his own question, he had no idea for what he was seized, or on what evidence. His case being a new one in that locality, not noted for political criminals, was referred to the Kagoshima authorities, and his innocence being established he was released after forty days' imprisonment.

He was married about this time to Shina Uchino, whose father, a retainer of the prince, had died many years before. Anticipating my story, Mrs. Ishii has always been a true helpmeet to her husband. She received baptism at Takahashi, Bichū, in 1886, and has quietly but conscientiously aided Mr. Ishii in all his philanthropic schemes.

In 1882 he went to Miyazaki (Hiuga) and became a policeman for six months. Falling into bad habits (wine and women) he went to Dr. Ogiwara for treatment, and received from that excellent man not only pills and potions but sound moral advice. Dr. Ogiwara had previously talked with him about the existence of one true God and the immortality of the soul. He now urged the young man to break off his evil habits and act as though he had an immortal soul in his charge.

Ishii was deeply impressed and decided to study medicine. Dr. Ogiwara advised him to go to Okayama, as the school there was one of the finest in the country, and because of the presence of Mr. Kanamori and other Christians in the city, he could make a more thorough study of the western religion. Dr. Ogiwara was a regular reader of the "Shichi Ichi Zappo" and "Rikugo Zasshi," the leading, if not the only Christian periodicals of the time.

In August 1882, this now thoroughly aroused student came

to Okayama. He had no Bible and had read but little about Christ and His great work for the world. He had learned from Dr. Ogiwara that faith, hope, and love are the three fundamentals of Christianity. His appetite was whetted for more of this new system of divine truth.

✓ Finding his way to the church he began to make inquiries of the Bible-seller's wife. His dialect was so different from the Bizen talk, that he and Mrs. Y. had great difficulty in understanding each other. To add to the embarrassment, mischievous students had lately troubled the family living in the church by asking senseless questions. The Bible-seller supposed Ishii to be one of that set, and to be mocking his wife, so he spoke to him impatiently, and in a few minutes all parties were rather hot with indignation.

The young student, thinking if that were a specimen of Christian action, he desired nothing more to do with Protestantism, turned on his heel and sought the Roman Catholics. They treated him with marked kindness, and as he was a stranger in the city and needing friends, he was deeply impressed by their genuine courtesy.

At the instigation of the French priest, a month later he took rooms adjoining those of his clerical friend, and after studying Roman Catholicism for one year, became an earnest believer and supporter of that faith. The following summer he became very anxious about the eternal welfare of his parents and friends, and induced Mr. Miyaki, the Roman Catholic evangelist, to go with him to Hiuga on a tour. Mr. Ishii's zeal in the matter is shown by the fact that he paid one half the evangelist's expenses.

✓ Many meetings were held, but not a single believer made. At that time there were three earnest Protestant seekers in Takanabe, among them Dr. Ogiwara. Mr. Ishii had long talks with his old friends. He noted one great difference, they had

Bibles, he had none. On returning to Okayama he purchased a New Testament and began to call secretly on Pastor Kanamori. He also attended, unbeknown to his Catholic friends, a theatre meeting in the interests of Protestantism, at which Messrs. Yokoi, Miyagawa, and Matsuyama were the prominent speakers. He was specially impressed by the deep meaning of the word *life* as emphasized in many ways.

Being troubled to remain longer in the priest's house, when at heart so suspicious of the peculiar teachings of Catholicism, he changed his residence, and began to associate more and more with Protestants.

He held on, nominally, a year longer with the Roman Catholics for friendship's sake, but on November 2nd., 1884, he publicly entered the Protestant communion, being rebaptized at his own request and against the advice of Pastor Kanamori. Three of his intimate friends, all from Hiuga, Kayashima, Iwamura, and Watanabe, came over with him.

The Catholic priest was deeply grieved and even indignant at the step. He had taken every possible occasion to speak evil of Protestantism, and in his final letter of dismissal used such expressions as "My son, you are going straight to the devil."

Without delaying to compare systems of faith, three facts are worthy of note by the careful student of this brief biography, First, the great kindness of Roman Catholics in their personal dealings with men; second, their non-use of the Bible; third, their bitter attacks on Protestantism.

Like seeks like. Spiritual affinities assert themselves. Mr. Ishii's history gives us not only an excellent illustration of this truth, but in doing so honours the faith and spiritual acquirements of a Japanese woman.

If one were asked to name the most devoted Christian woman in Okayama, the answer would be without hesitation, Koume Sumiya.

This rare disciple of the Christ was known by name to Mr. Ishii, but he met her for the first time the Sabbath he united with the Protestant church. They were kindred spirits in things of the soul. He named her the mother of his faith, and aimed from that time at a spirit and consecration like hers. To this day he goes to her for counsel and sympathy in every experience.

On one occasion, when sick, discouraged, and nearly crazed with pain, he decided, for purely selfish reasons, to leave Okayama and go to Osaka for further study. Sumiya San plead with him in vain, but he could not forget her tears at parting, and a month later he returned to Okayama, penitent and submissive. That she, in no way related to him, should be so solicitous of his spiritual welfare, convinced him anew of the verities of the Christian faith.

In July 1884, occurred an event which not only helped him forward in the divine life, but gave him his first impulse toward humanitarian activity.

At his home in Takanabe, he read of the gifts to Joseph Neeshima by an old man and an old woman in America of two dollars each for the establishment of a Christian college in Japan. That these poor old people should give money for use in a distant land was a new gospel to him. From that time he devoted his life to the welfare of others.

He opened at once, in an old Shinto shrine on the edge of the town, a night school for poor children. On his return to Okayama at the end of the summer, the school was continued by one of the boys he had saved out of beggary.

For four years this enterprise was kept up, Mr. Ishii furnishing the funds and the faith. He testifies that as often as he forgot to pray in Okayama for the Takanabe school, a letter was sure to come from his assistant, saying, "The school is running down." Then more earnest prayer in Bizen was fol-

lowed by a letter from Hiuga, saying, "All goes well again." This not once but many times.

In March 1885, he visited his native province in company with Mr. Cary. This was the beginning of consecutive Protestant work in that region.

The following August, while living in a Japanese house belonging to the missionaries at Okayama, he read a translation of Smiles' "Self Help," by the famous scholar Nakamura.

He was profoundly impressed by the testimony of Dr. Guthrie, "the Apostle of the Ragged School movement" as to the influence exerted upon his life work, by the example of John Pounds, the humble Portsmouth cobbler, who, "while earning his daily bread by the sweat of his brow, had rescued from misery and saved to society not less than five hundred of these poor children."

Like Dr. Guthrie, Mr. Ishii could say, "I felt ashamed of myself; I felt reproved for the little I had done. I was astonished at this man's achievements." He wrote in his journal at the time, "I believe myself born for that purpose, and I will follow Guthrie's example in imitating Pounds."

While a student in the Medical School, he paid out of allowances from home, in addition to his own bills, the charges of a student friend (Watanabe) then in Okayama. Money becoming scarce for such a strain, he decided to work as an *amma* (massage shampooer) out of school. He kept this up through the winter, going generally first to Mrs. Sumiya's house for a prayer with her, and then plunging out into the cold night and working at this exhausting profession till nearly or quite midnight, then rising at four to study that he might hold his high place in the class within the first three.

The plucky student secured plenty of work, earning from ten to twenty cents a night, and lost no opportunity to preach his new faith. Several of his patrons were led to embrace

Christianity; but he injured his health by this overwork, and laid the foundation of his later illness.

✓ Dr. Suga, a leading instructor in the Medical School, and now at the head of the Okayama Hospital, learning of the doings of this promising student, wrote him a most sympathetic letter, extending a cordial invitation to come and live in his house, promising to pay all necessary bills if he would drop his night work.

Young Ishii's independent spirit was strongly inclined to decline the invitation, but on the advice of his two wise counsellors, Pastor Kanamori and Mrs. Sumiya, he yielded, and for three months was an inmate of the Dr.'s family. Both the Dr. and his wife have been most loyal friends of Mr. Ishii ever since. Mrs. Suga made no effort to restrain her tears when he left the house to board elsewhere.

Dr. Suga freely gives him medical advice and other aid for his Orphanage, and promptly subscribed one hundred dollars when Mr. Ishii began his work for the earthquake sufferers last November. I take special pleasure in mentioning this, because Dr. Suga is not a professed believer in the western religion.

In December 1886, Geo. Muller came to Japan. The following February, while boarding in the house of a Christian (Nozu) he heard a letter read from the son, then a theological student at the Doshisha, describing Mr. Muller and his visit to Kyoto and dwelling on the "life of faith" of that wonderful man.

Again deep thoughts were stirred in Ishii's mind. Then first he understood something of what is meant by those words in common use, "Living Heavenly Father and His love." Then first he committed his life and all to God and His service. Heretofore his purpose had been to serve God in some way after graduation. Now he decided to begin at once and for

children. This he numbers three in the list of great causes that led to his life work.

Though suffering from brain trouble, he continued to study, but not improving, went in April to Kamiachi mura in Oku gōri, some twelve miles east of Okayama and began practising medicine to support himself.

He here definitely put into practice for the first time a principle of action so common with him since, of having no reserves in money or resources, but doing to-day for others the utmost that he can, and trusting God for the future.

His fellow student Watanabe, then at the Doshisha, was greatly troubled for money. After earnest prayer and careful thought, especially over a definition of love given him by Mr. Kanamori, "Forget self and do for others," and Geo. Muller's "Trust is following God's Word," he decided to send all the money he had and could earn to Watanabe, should it be needed. Joy and peace took possession of his soul, and one might add, have never left it since.

The house adjoining the one where he roomed was a miserable hovel, frequented by the very poor. One day in June, a beggar woman with two children stopped there and remained over night. Noticing that the family was very needy, Mr. Ishii stepped in and gave a bowl of his own rice to the eight year old boy. The lad immediately passed it over to his younger sister who was a cripple. The mother was out begging for a breakfast. Returning later she called on Mr. Ishii and thanked him heartily for his kind act.

A little sympathy and persuasion unloosed the woman's tongue, and she told a pitiful story. Her husband had died, she was now begging her way back to Bingo, her old province, hoping against hope to secure work there. She said more than once, "I could support myself, and the crippled girl, but I can't earn enough in addition for the boy." Mr. Ishii, prompt to act

upon his newly formed rule of life, at once offered to adopt the boy. The mother love was strong and the woman hesitated. Mr. Ishii begged her to give him up for all their sakes. At last the woman consented on condition that the boy might be returned to her every night. This arrangement was followed for a week, Mr. Ishii caring for the boy through the day and giving him back to the mother for the night.

The family were so filthy and the boy so diseased that every morning, on receiving the lad, Mr. Ishii stripped him, and gave him a hot bath, actually "scraping off the vermin" with a brush, as more than once I have heard him tell a Japanese audience. He then dressed the child in clean garments, taking these off at night and putting on the dirty rags once more.

After a week's trial, the mother was convinced of Mr. Ishii's sincerity of purpose, and committed the boy to his charge. This was the first child in Mr. Ishii's adopted family.

The boy still lives and is frequently shown to audiences as "the original orphan." With such pains was the work begun which speedily grew into an organized Asylum for needy children.

Fourteen months later that mother visited the Asylum in Okayama, and could hardly believe that the healthy, happy boy who came out and called her mother was the diseased, filthy, stunted child she had so reluctantly given up to a better life. The woman was able to earn a comfortable living for herself and one child. Relieving her of the care of the other saved the whole family to society by turning beggars into bread-winners. Such cases are frequent in the experience of the Asylum, and explain one reason why Mr. Ishii believes in a charity of this sort. A poor woman can support herself and one child, but not more, except with great hardship. The joy of this family over its salvation was a melting sight to all who witnessed it.

In July 1887, occurred what Mr. Ishii reckons the fourth and final cause for the opening of the Orphanage. He learned

of a poor fisherman and his wife, who though but slightly removed from starvation themselves, adopted a little girl of three and a boy of five, left by parents and two elder brothers, who all died from cholera. The heartless neighbours were about to bury the younger child in the coffin with its mother, it being nearly dead from starvation and no one to care for it.

Two thoughts came home to the young physician with great force: First, the pitiable condition of orphans; Second, if those who know nothing of the great love of Christ can show such kindness, as these poor fishers, what ought not we Christians to do? Dare we do less than they?

He returned to Okayama, conferred with his trusty advisers, and in September 1887 rented a part of a large temple of the *Zen* sect (Buddhist), moved in with his family, and quietly opened his Asylum for needy children.

He began with the boy whose story I have told above, and two other lads whom he had picked up. He had no resources but his own abounding faith and devoted spirit. A medical student himself on the last year of his course, with every reason for encouragement if he devoted himself to his profession, he was so impressed with the Divine call to work for children that the following winter, when within four months of graduation, he withdrew from the school and refused to apply for a diploma.

He did this against the advice of all his friends, and solely that his heart might not be divided between his profession and his calling. He instinctively felt that he would lean on his diploma if he had one. He would not be a doctor in name, lest he should be turned aside from the straight line of his life's duty.

I know of no clearer case in modern days of an "eye single" to life's one work. Such sacrifices for principle and such sensitive balancings of duty are too rare in actual life to pass unnoticed. They merit the careful thought of all who desire the development of man's spiritual nature. There are modern Pauls who

are never disobedient to any Heavenly vision (Acts xxviii., 19.) They are the seers of their age, the saviours of their generation.

Since that day of momentous decision, the institution has grown steadily in numbers, influence and good works. It has passed through many trials, but they only serve to strengthen its faith in the spiritual verities of life. It has been reduced at times to its last pot of gruel, but the prayer of faith has brought relief, and sometimes just at the moment of dire need.

Mr. Ishii has never refused shelter to any needy applicant. His home has become so widely known, especially since the earthquake last fall, that he is forced to inquire carefully into the actual needs of each case, so as not to be imposed upon by the shiftless and the lazy.

Twice he has shown the greatness of his soul by rising to meet the emergency of widespread calamity, after the Kishii floods of 1890, and the great earthquake of 1891.

Quietly conferring with the children last November, he infused his own self-forgetful spirit into them. They were as ready as he to give for those needier than themselves. Subscribing thirteen dollars out of their own poverty, they started out to solicit aid from others. The local Salvation Army took up the work under Mr. Ishii's lead, and has raised from Japanese sources over eleven hundred dollars, and seventeen hundred articles of clothing.

A Branch Asylum was opened at Nagoya, and seventy-seven earthquake orphans are cared for there and at the main home in Okayama.

Mr. Ishii's second daughter, born January 15th., while he was away on this wider work of charity, received the name of *Shin* (earthquake), and was dedicated from birth to the work of ministering to those who should suffer from great natural calamities. His elder daughter, born two years before, he named *Tomo*, for she is to be the Friend of Orphans.

INDUSTRIAL.

Feeling that his Home was imperfect so long as the children were cared for entirely through the charity of others, and not taught to work for themselves, he opened an Industrial Department in September 1890. The trades now taught are printing, farming, barbering, straw-weaving, silk embroidering, and the manufacture of matting, besides cooking, washing, and sewing. He plans soon to open match and soap manufactories, and a training school for carpenters. The children work through the day and study in the evening. There is also a kindergarten for the very youngest, and an English class for ten of the most promising students.

Of many gifts to the Asylum from all parts of the world, the past year has seen two of special magnitude, one from a Japanese, and one from abroad. A humble devoted evangelist in Banshu has given his whole property, valued at some eighteen hundred dollars, to Mr. Ishii's work, and that estate is now used as the farm branch of the Asylum.

In response to an appeal by the Rev. B. F. Buxton, at the time of the earthquake, a draft amounting to two thousand two hundred and forty dollars has been received from England, mainly, if not entirely raised in one family, for this timely work of Christian charity.

The total gifts, including land and clothing from the first for this widely known Orphanage and its outreaching work, sum up to about eleven thousand dollars. Measured by figures alone, the faith of this one Japanese has been singularly fruitful.

One striking fact is that it has never been necessary during the four and a half years of this work, to buy a single article of wearing apparel, save when the earthquake branch was first opened at Nagoya. Enough has always been contributed for

the needs of the children by students of the Doshisha and other schools, or by churches and communities.

Two hundred and eighty-five boys and girls have been connected with the Home. Of these, twenty-five have died, seven run away, twenty been returned to their friends, and two hundred and thirty three may now be found in the three Homes.

The children practically govern themselves, they being divided for this purpose and for their trades, like the old Israelites, into companies of tens, of fifties, and of hundreds. All elections are by ballot, weekly meetings are held about Asylum interests, the graver cases alone being referred to Mr. Ishii.

The children print sermonettes and distribute them through the city, and are preparing to publish a small paper. They take great interest in their industries, are loyal to the Asylum, almost worship "Father Ishii" and soon catch his spirit of simple trust and practical piety.

Of many stories full of point and pathos which might be told I select the following :

A boy named Nobutaro Togawa, whose father had been the chief man of his village, but had become a profligate and abandoned his family, and whose mother had been driven blind and sick by her frantic efforts to support the family, was sent to the Asylum three years ago. He soon proved himself the brightest boy in the Orphanage and showed his *Samurai* blood. He always stood at or near the head of his class, learned the barber's trade, and to be one of the Asylum buglers. At the time of the earthquake excitement he overworked and died of cholera, November 14th, 1891.

He was supported in the Orphanage by a circle of Presbyterian ladies in Rochester, New York, and was a boy of marked promise. His death was a severe blow to the Asylum, but his

rare spirit of pluck and high Christian purpose made a deep impression on the other children.

Mr. Ishii has decided to utilise this and give a worthy memorial to the dead boy, by naming the last house purchased by the Asylum "Togawa Home." The lad's earnest face will look down from the wall of its principal room, and every thing possible will be done to perpetuate the memory and influence of one who seemed like an idiot during the first few weeks of his stay at the Home, but under its genial Christian influence soon developed into a youth of remarkable power and promise.

Last summer, Mrs. H. H. Paxton, of California, who was visiting Japan, offered to take one of the orphans to America, give him a home, and teach him a trade.

Katsunosuke Nishio was selected and accompanied the party to America. Great kindness was shown him by Mrs. Paxton and her family, but the change in diet and surroundings proved too great, and yielding to disease, he died in less than a month after reaching his journey's end.

This boy, born in Osaka, was growing up a disobedient, thieving lad, and even after he was placed at the Asylum severely taxed Mr. Ishii's patience, by threatening to corrupt the other children. At last "his spiritual eyes were opened," he became a thoroughly reformed boy, and was interested in every good work. At the annual meeting of the Congregational Churches a year ago, he gave twenty cents, one half of all his money, to help lift the debt on the Home Missionary Society, an incident which, when reported through the country, stirred all hearts and brought much money into the treasury. At another time he gave his portion of rice to some starving people.

His chief object in going to America was to work for the Industrial Department of the Asylum, especially the barbers' shop. His aim was to aid in training Christian barbers, who

should convert one of the most pernicious trades in Japan into an evangelistic agency. This purpose is being carried out by other Lilliputian youngsters, who will shave a man and preach him a sermon and send him away with a tract, all for one cent. They now march about the town, soliciting trade.

Besides Mr. Ishii and his wife, the aid of twenty-one assistants is required in the three homes. As one remarkable feature of the institution, it may be stated that these are all thoroughly imbued with the peculiar spirit of the Orphanage. It is a labor of love in every case, and should Mr. Ishii be removed to-morrow these loyal helpers would carry it on in the same unique spirit. This most desirable state of things has come about during the past year, and gives a look of promise and permanence to the institution.

The Asylum is preeminently a place of prayer. Founded in prayer it is continued in the same spirit. The morning hour from six to seven is called the prayer hour. The children go singly to a graveyard in the rear of the temple for private devotions. Also at nine o'clock on Friday evening, a short meeting for those who desire it is held at the same sacred spot. This is the Bethel of the Asylum, and has witnessed several remarkable answers to the prayer of faith.

After breakfast, comes a half hour of devotions in the temple and again in the evening. On Sabbath afternoon the children march in military order, headed by their own buglers, to a church a mile and a half away. It is a stirring sight, and has led more than one sightseer to send gifts to the Asylum and inquire into the claims of the Christian religion.

It is needless to add that such an institution continues to have manifold wants: that is, it sees new openings constantly for work in the name of Christ. Whether it will ever be self-supporting it is impossible now to say. Industrial profits in this country are so small that the outlook is discouraging.

In this connection it is pleasant to record that on the morning following the news of the receipt of the large Buxton gift from England, the Asylum voted unanimously to use no more charity money for food except for rice. So far as the profits of their industries allow they will purchase vegetables, fish, meat, etc., but if driven to it they will live on rice and salt rather than burden unnecessarily the charity of Christendom.

At all events for the present, the Home must trust to voluntary contributions to keep it running. Twenty dollars a year amply supports one child, and is almost sure to turn a burdensome beggar into a Christian breadwinner.

The Asylum ought to have one,—yes, two good organs. It sadly needs another house or two at three hundred dollars a building. It could make wise use of more land at three hundred dollars an acre. It deserves, and will continue to receive, the prayers and sympathy of a multitude of friends in all parts of the world, and of every Christian sect.

To sum up the man and his work in a word, Ishii and his Institution are a practical realization of his own favorite New Testament verse: "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another." A love that works itself out in deeds. A life that is truly Christlike. The spirit of the Bible worked into flesh and blood. Simple loyalty worthy of a Christian *Samurai*. Faith that feels, hope that though always grave is never despondent, love that counts no cost, if it may but save a few of the "the least of these my brethren."

Such a man is Jūji Ishii. As those know who read Japanese the cross is hidden in his name. It is sunk deep into his life as well. Sixteen years ago, he heard for the first time of that wondrous symbol. Then it was simple magic used for a selfish end. Now it has grown to mystery of a peculiarly spiritual order, but devoted to the noblest of practical aims.

From magic to the marvellous, from superstition to

enlightened faith, from selfish indulgence and an aimless drifting to a life of sacrifice and highest purpose, from an unknown country lad to one of the elect of God, known throughout Christendom—a mighty step for these few years.

There is hope for the race that possesses such remnants. There is a future for the land that can produce such spiritual noblemen. There is power in the Gospel of Christ that still works such marvellous changes.

JAMES H. PETTEE.

Okayama, Japan, April 16th, 1892.





